THOUGHTS

ON

MORTALITY,

OCCASIONED BY

The DEATH of

The Rev.

Mr. [illegible]

Nihil semper floret; ætas succedit ætati. Cato.

Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede, pauperum tabernas regumque turres. Hor.

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MDCCLXXIX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

MOrtality is a ſubject, in which we are all greatly intereſted, and inſtead of making an apology for writing upon it, I have many good reaſons for preferring it to other topicks.

For twenty-ſeven years, I have frequently viſited, and converſed with families, and individuals, both in health and proſperity, and, in ſickneſs and adverſity, and, in general, have found that the latter ſtate, is moſt favourable for cultivating, adorning, and beautifying the human heart. Wax heated, by the Fire, is ſuſceptible of impreſſions, of any kind;

and the heart melted, by ſorrow, or trouble, is pliant and flexible.

When we are in diſtreſs, or attend our beloved friends in their expiring moments, our ears are open to inſtruction, fervent, and ſeaſonable prayers, pious and good advice, and tender ſympathy, are, then, reviving, like the gentle rains, and dews of heaven, to the parched earth. "To him that "is afflicted, pity ſhould be ſhewed "from his friend." Job vi. ver. 14.

No feature, in the character of Job, is more amiable, than the following, "Did not I weep for him that was in "trouble? Was not my ſoul grieved "for the poor?" Job. xxx. ver. 25. By cheriſhing and ſtrengthening the kind, the ſocial, and friendly affections, and giving them vent, in weeping with thoſe that weep, we mutually

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communicate and receive refined pleaſure, and enjoy the higheſt gratifications, of which mortality can participate.

The late very ingenious and learned Dr John Gregory, in his Comparative View, &c. makes the enſuing juſt remark: "Nature has annexed to all "our ſympathetic feelings, that ſecret "and wonderful endearment, whereby "we enter into the deepeſt ſcenes of "diſtreſs and ſorrow, with a melt-"ing ſoftneſs of heart, far more de-"lightful than all the joys which "diſſipated and unthinking mirth can "inſpire."

Dr Akenſide, who was born and ſpent his juvenile years in Newcaſtle upon Tyne, and who died in the forty-ninth year of his age, to the unſpeakable grief of his friends, to the

the great loſs of the phyſical world in particular, and to that of letters in general, enlarges on the ſame idea, in a ſmooth, neat, and elegant, at the ſame time, in a moſt beautiful and pathetic dreſs.

Aſk the faithful youth,
Why the cold urn of her whom long he lov'd,
So often fills his arms; ſo often draws
His lonely footſteps at the ſilent hour,
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
Oh! he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds,
Should ne'er ſeduce his boſom to forego
That ſacred hour, when ſtealing from the noiſe
Of care and envy, ſweet remembrance ſooths
With virtue's kindeſt looks his aking breaſt,
And turns his tears to rapture.

Happy ſhall the author, of the following pages, account himſelf, if they adminiſter the ſmalleſt conſolation to the ſons and daughters of affliction, for, to alleviate the miſeries and promote the happineſs of mankind

kind are his delight. Pecuniary motives have not brought them from his cloſet, to the candid inſpection of his generous friends, to whom he moſt chearfully gives them as a teſtimony of attention, eſteem, and gratitude. He is more than rewarded, for the time and care beſtowed upon them, if they ſtimulate to the practice of piety, benevolence, and every virtue, for, if he knows his heart, no higher pleaſure, and no greater ambition hath he, than, if poſſible, to make the morning, the noon, and the evening, of life ſerene, joyful, and triumphant.

Awful heaven!
Great ruler of the various heart of man!
Beyond my wiſh, my thought, give me the lights,
The virtues which my ſacred truſt requires;
A loving, lov'd, unterrifying power,
Such as becomes a Father; humble wiſdom;
Plain, primitive, ſincerity; kind zeal,
For truth and virtue rather than opinions;
And above all, the charitable ſoul
Of healing peace and Chriſtian moderation.

Mr. Davidson shews a warm zeal to
mankind, & present comfort & social enjoy
ment to mankind; & for that purpose, he would
urge them to the practice of piety, benevo
lence, virtue. Such is the design, & no
ble motive, he tells us in the preface, has
led these pages from the closet to the
public eye. The thoughts, though not
new nor uncommon, which are conveyed
in so plain a dress, must strike
with importance. In one or two instances
one expressed, perhaps, in rather
unusual way: but, on the whole,
one adapted to excite, in those
who peruse them, a serious & diligent
to make that improvement of
which may best prepare them
its end.

Dec 28. 1792

THOUGHTS ON MORTALITY, &c.

PSALM cxlvi. ver. 4.

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts periſh.

EVERY day we meet with ſtriking, and affecting demonſtrations of the frailty, the uncertainty, and brevity of human life; and although the conſideration of theſe, have a ſtrong, and natural tendency to wean our hearts and affections from this world, and inflame us with ardent deſires, and unwearied efforts to acquire thoſe

virtues, which ſhall ſurvive the diſſolution of our bodies, yet there is reaſon, to apprehend that men do not always liſten, attentively, to the voice of Providence in theſe diſpenſations.

While the arrows of death fly around us, and pierce the hearts, not only of acquaintances, but of our beſt friends, and moſt endearing relations, ſome are in circumſtances ſimilar to thoſe of the prophet Jonah, when there was a mighty tempeſt in the ſea, ſo that the ſhip was like to be broken, he was gone down to the ſides of the ſhip and was faſt aſleep, Jonah i. ver. 4. In like manner, ſome unmoved, and untouched, can ſee a thouſand fall at their ſide, and ten thouſand at their right hand, without ruminating on their mortality, and making proper, and ſeaſonable reflections, on the fleeting life of man, which

which as a vapour appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away. On account of ſuch thoughtleſs creatures, to call them no worſe, for to be ſevere and harſh in cenſuring is my averſion, may we not join with Moſes, in his very earneſt, and moſt fervent prayer, Deut. xxxii. ver. 29. "O! that they were wiſe, that they "underſtood this, that they would "conſider their latter end!"

The ſudden and unexpected death, of a kind, and generous parent; of an indulgent and loving huſband, of a faithful and affectionate wife, or of dutiful, obedient, and grateful children, generally, if not always, makes deep impreſſions on our minds: events, like theſe, ſoften and melt, ſweeten and meliorate our ſpirits; convince us of our abſolute, and entire dependence upon the Moſt High, whom,

perhaps, when we were in health, at eaſe, and met with no diſaſters, we did not acknowledge, much leſs worſhipped or adored.

The want of that company, in which our ſouls delighted, and the abſence of thoſe whom we ſincerely loved, in whom we firmly truſted, to whom we imparted the ſecrets of our hearts, laid open our ſorrows and pleaſures, our fears and hopes, with whom we took ſweet counſel together, and ſpent many innocent and agreeable years, days and hours, conſtrain us to ſay, with Solomon, "Vanity of vanities, for all is vanity "and vexation of ſpirit." Here we have no continuing city. Our joys, like roſes, wither in the very ſeaſon of blooming.

When

When we think that our mountain is very ſtrong, and we ſhall not ſpeedily be moved, our rejoicing is turned into weeping: our gay, and lively proſpects, and our animating, and towering hopes, by making themſelves wings, like an eagle, fly away; and their deplored flight, at once, plunges us into grief and diſappointment.

At theſe chearleſs, and diſconſolate, though important and awakening moments, the feelings of piety, and humanity are uncommonly warm and vigorous; like rivers, ſwelled by heavy, rapid, and long continued rains, and torrents ruſhing from the high places of the earth, they overflow their banks, though in a little time, they return and content themſelves with their wonted channels.

Leſt

Leſt theſe impreſſions which are, ſometimes, made on our hearts, by the death of friends and relations ſhould be eraſed, like marks on the ſea ſhore, which are effaced by the next returning tide; leſt we take up with this world, as our portion and only treaſure, while we have no breathings, and pantings after an inheritance, uncorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: a late diſpenſation of Providence hath directed my thoughts, to this paſſage of holy Writ, in which the uncertainty of life is painted in few, but expreſſive words, the meaning of which, I ſhall attempt to illuſtrate, aſcertain, and improve.

Here is a ſhort, and pathetic deſcription, of the frailty, and uncertainty, of human life, his breath goeth forth. "Man," ſaith Job, chap. xiv, ver. 1. "that is born of a woman,

"is

" is of few days, and full of trouble." Like a tender and delicate flower, he may bud, bloſſom, and flouriſh, and his flattering appearances may ſwell the imaginations, and raiſe, the expectations, of his friends, to an uncommon height, at the ſame time, he is continually expoſed to bleak and nipping colds, which may bereave him of all his charms, nay deſtroy him, in the morning, at noon, in the evening, or at any moment of the day. No ſtation, or circumſtances, in life, can ſhield us from paying that debt, which our progenitors have already paid, and which we, and our poſterity muſt pay.

Uſeful, and numberleſs diſcoveries have been made in philoſophy, in phyſic, in divinity, and in every branch of literature; yet the antients and moderns, by their united, and laudable

laudable enquiries, have not found out any herbs, or medicines, or regimen, which can ſecure us from the arrows of death. None, of the human race, can dry up the ocean, and "there is no man that hath power "over the ſpirit, to retain the ſpirit; "neither hath he power in the day of "death; and there is no diſcharge in "that war." Eccl. viii. 8.

Some, on account of their infancy, or age and infirmities, are exempted from thoſe occupations, in which others muſt drudge and toil: Death is a buſineſs, in which the prince and beggar, the old and young, the rich and poor, the high and low, the wiſe and learned, and the fooliſh and illiterate, muſt engage.

Riches defend their proprietors from the griping penury, which depreſs the ſpirits,

ſpirits, and imbitter the lives of others; but thouſands, and ten thouſands of the moſt intrepid and gallant ſoldiers, appointed with the beſt weapons, cannot protect, their beloved ſovereign, from the keen graſp of death. The gold of Ophir, and the moſt valuable rubies, nay mountains of prey, cannot prevail upon the inexorable king of terrors, to ſtop the wheels of his all-conquering chariot, and permit the devoted victim to prolong his exiſtence for a few moments. We cannot ſay to death, as Felix ſaid to Paul, Acts xxiv. ver. 25, "Go thy "way, for this time; when I have "a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for "thee."

Victors, elated with ſignal exploits; and when gazing crouds flattered, careſſed, and applauded them; by the entreaties and cries of afflicted mothers,

and the affrighted looks of helpleſs infants, have been perſuaded to replace their ſwords in their ſcabbards, and to ſave the lives of thoſe, whom, in their hearts they had reſolved to maſſacre: ſuch reſiſtleſs power have beauty and virtue, bathed in tears, and dreſſed in mourning, that they have diſarmed, tamed, and humaniſed fierce, and brutal tyrants, and made thoſe who were the ſcourges and terror of mankind, gentle, mild, compaſſionate, and generous: but death, cannot be ſoftened, into pity, or relent, and alter his fatal, his irreverſible, and irreſiſtable determination. "Like the deaf adder, he ſtoppeth his "ears," to human prayers, tears and ſighs: like an hungry, and ravening lion, furious and eager for prey, he teareth the loving huſband from the embraces of the affectionate wife, and the darling child from the arms

of

of the fond parents, whoſe feeling hearts bleed, languiſh, and almoſt die within them, when they perceive him, ſternly drawing from his appalling quiver, the killing arrow.

Neither feeble infancy, blooming youth, charming beauty, manly ſtrength, or withered and wrinkled age are ſecured from his certain, and unavoidable darts. The water, the fire, the ſword, intemperance, fevers, inflammations, conſumptions, and a world of malignant deſeaſes, which exceed enumeration, elude the inveſtigation, and baffle the ſkill of the moſt celebrated phyſicians, are the direful inſtruments by which he works, and lays waſte the dwellings of mankind. "I have cut off the nations; "their towers are deſolate, I made "their ſtreets waſte, that none paſſeth "by: their cities are deſtroyed, ſo

 "that

" that there is no man, that there is " none inhabitant." Zeph. iii. 6.

O! Death! what havock, what depredations, what grief and calamities, haſt thou brought upon this earth! Many populous towns, many flouriſhing cities haſt thou quite deſolated. Many ſtately, and ſuperb palaces, many low and mean cottages, haſt thou totally evacuated! The trophies of thy innumerable victories over the human race, and the various monuments of thy boundleſs power, have been, and every day may be found, both in the ſea, and on the dry land. The victories, and triumphs, of antient, and modern warriors, generally were and are confined, to one part of the globe, but the inhabitants, of the eaſt, and weſt, of the north, and ſouth, have equally felt thy deſtructive rage. Thoſe who dwelt in cold,

and

and frozen, and in hot, and ſultry climes, thoſe who lived, on the lofty mountains, and in the humble vallies, and thoſe, who have traded, on the vaſt, and ſtormy ocean, and by plowing, have conquered her unruly, proud, and huge billows, at laſt have ſubmitted to thee, and acknowledged, thy ſovereign and uncontrouled might. "The Barbarian and Sythian, the bond "and free, the Jew and Gentile," have become, and every moment, are becoming thy victims.

Long haſt thou opened, thy grim, thy hideous and devouring jaws; myriads of all nations, and kingdoms, and ranks, and ages, haſt thou ſwallowed up; and although thou invironeſt in thy dank and putrid tombs, in thy ghaſtly and horrific vaults, beauties and heroes, once the boaſt, the joy and glory, of their friends,

or

or the dread, the hatred, and envy, of their rivals, yet thy violent and inſatiable thirſt is not quenched; thou crieſt give, give a little more: thou carrieſt away, kings and princes, nobles and peaſants, as with a flood: "In the morning they are like graſs "which groweth up; in the morning "it flouriſheth and groweth up, cut "down by thy ſcythe in the evening "it withereth," Pſalm xc. ver. 5, 6. "Thou prevaileſt for ever againſt him, "and he paſſeth; thou changeſt his "countenance, and ſendeſt him away." Job xiv. ver. 20.

Obſerve, what the text aſſerteth of man, when his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; humiliating thought indeed! conſideration melting and diſtreſſing beyond meaſure! The beautiful proportion, and the comely parts of man, which are the works,

works, of omnipotent power, of boundleſs wiſdom, and infinite goodneſs, ſhall ſoon be mingled with that very duſt and earth, on which we walk every day. Thoſe amiable and engaging perſons, whom we have frequently beheld, with growing rapture, have attracted the admiration of millions, given ſcope to the creative invention of poets, and afforded materials, for the pens of hiſtorians, ſhall be immured in the dark, cold, and dreary manſions of the dead. The moſt exact ſymmetry of features, and the moſt delicate tints of complexion may ſay, "to corruption, Thou art my "father; and to the worm, Thou art "my mother and ſiſter." Job xvii. 14.

The bright, the lively, and ſparkling eyes, which, without the help of the lips of kindneſs, expreſs the mild, the gentle, the placid, and endearing

dearing ſentiments of the heavenly ſoul, ſhall be obſcured by the icy hand of death. The melliſluent tongue, which often cheared the diſconſolate and deſponding heart, and by pouring the ſweet, the balmy, and healing oil, of ſympathy, into the throbing and tortured breaſt, like, a guardian angel, dried up the tears upon cheeks furrowed by pining care, corroding ſickneſs, waſting pain, and colliquant grief, ſhall be mute, in the humid grave. Our ears ſhall be ſtrangers to the moſt enchanting and harmonious ſounds of muſic. Our noſtrils ſhall loſe all reliſh for the moſt fragrant and delicious ſmells. Our hands ſhall not always be ſtretched out in giving the needful and reviving mite, to the poor, and needy, and cauſing the widows heart to ſing for joy. Our feet, ſhall not perform their kind, and friendly offices, and

by

by carrying us from place to place, give us opportunities of contemplating and admiring the great, the glorious, and marvelous works of our moſt bountiful and very compaſſionate creator.

Such diſmal, and terrific effects are occaſioned by thee, O Death! thou turneſt beauty into deformity; manly ſtrength and vigour unto ſtiff and inactive matter. "Like ſheep they are "laid in the grave, death ſhall feed "on them; and their beauty ſhall "conſume in the grave from their "dwelling." Pſalm xlix. ver. 14.

This leads me to take notice of what the Pſalmiſt further narrateth of man, "when his breath goeth forth, "and he returneth to his earth; in "that very day his thoughts periſh." From which words, we are not to

conclude, that men by death are annihilated, or return to a ſtate of non-exiſtence. God forbid. The giddy, the thoughtleſs, and diſſipated, who by the frequent reiterations of ſordid and low-minded vices, have blunted and darkened their underſtandings, ſhattered and emaciated their conſtitutions, and brought upon themſelves infamy, contempt, poverty, and wretchedneſs of every kind, tremble and ſhudder at the gloomy proſpect, of an eternal world, and a future, juſt, and impartial account. Though annihilation is the wiſh and deſire of thoſe, whoſe guilty conſciences accuſe them of the blackeſt ingratitude towards the God of love, kindneſs, and mercy, of unnatural cruelty to generous parents, and friends, and repeated acts of injuſtice to fellow mortals, yet they can no more obtain this, than they can ſhake the foundations

tions of the earth, and overturn the mountains. Fools alone make a mock at ſin, and ſcoff at God and religion.

A ſprightly author*, a few variations excepted, on this ſubject, writes in the following manner: I will venture to ſay, that men of the moſt enlarged, clear, and ſolid underſtandings, who have acted with the greateſt ſpirit, dignity, and propriety, and who have been regarded as the moſt uſeful and amiable members of ſociety, have never openly inſulted, or inſidiouſly attempted to ridicule the principles of religion; but on the contrary, have been its beſt and warmeſt friends. An intimate acquaintance with the works of nature, raiſes the

* Dr Gregory's moſt excellent Lectures on the Duties and Qualifications of a Phyſician.

mind to the moſt ſublime conception of the ſupreme Being, and at the ſame time dilates the heart with the moſt pleaſing views of Providence. Peculiar circumſtances in life, ſhould naturally diſpoſe us to look beyond the preſent ſcene of things, and engage our hearts on the ſide of religion. We have many opportunities of ſeeing people, once the gay and the happy, ſunk in deep diſtreſs; ſometimes devoted to a painful and lingering death; and ſometimes ſtruggling with the tortures of a diſtracted mind. Such afflictive ſcenes, one would imagine, might ſoften any heart, not dead to every feeling of humanity, and make it reverence that religion, which alone can ſupport the ſoul in the moſt complicated diſtreſſes; that religion, which teaches to enjoy life with chearfulneſs, and to reſign it with dignity. Should we have the misfortune to diſbelieve

in

in a future ſtate, yet if we have common good nature, we will conceal our ſentiments from others, with as much care as we would preſerve them from the infection of a mortal diſeaſe. With minds unfeeling, or occupied in various purſuits, we may not be aware of our own unhappy ſituation; yet it is barbarous to deprive expiring nature of its laſt ſupport, and to blaſt the only ſurviving comfort of thoſe who have taken a laſt farewel of every ſublunary pleaſure. But if motives of humanity, and a regard to the peace and happineſs of ſociety, cannot reſtrain us from expreſſing ſentiments deſtructive of religion or morals. The moſt favourable conſtruction we can put on ſuch conduct, is to ſuppoſe that it proceeds from an ungovernable levity, or criminal vanity, that forgets all the ties of morals, decency, and good manners.

How

How tremendous muſt the very thought of annihilation be to a good man! Thoſe, who love God fervently, and ſerve him, with perfect hearts, and willing minds, have often taſted, the exquiſite ſweets, of a good conſcience, the exalted and elevated raptures, of true devotion, would not, for ten thouſand worlds, forego the exhilerating and raviſhing proſpect, of "beholding the face of God in "righteouſneſs, being ſatisfied with "his likeneſs, and drinking from the "rivers of pleaſure, and the fulneſs "of joy, which are in his preſence, "and at his right hand."

They know, they know aſſuredly, that though death exerts his power, over the body, yet neither death, nor hell, nor legions of its inhabitants, can annoy the immortal, the better part. "When the body returneth to "the

" the duſt, the ſpirit returneth to God " who gave it." Eccl. xii. ver. 7. Like a priſoner it is ſet at full liberty, chains, and fetters, of every kind, are unlooſed, all burthens are thrown aſide; and in conſequence of this happy and glorious change, it acts with greater freedom, increaſing alacrity, and higher pleaſure: it deſcended from above, it is only a ſtranger, pilgrim, and ſojourner on earth: it exults, it glories, in flying through the vaſt expanſe of heaven, re-aſcending to the throne of God, and joining the bleſſed ſociety of holy and happy angels, and kindred ſpirits.

By the thoughts periſhing, we are to underſtand, that death puts a final, and eternal period, to all ſublunary deſires, purſuits, and employments. The dead are ſtrangers to the little cares, the trifling anxieties, the variable

able conjectures, the fluctuating expectations, the reſtleſs changes, the irritating paſſions, and the whimſical humours of thoſe who dwell in houſes of clay; they have no bodies that require either meat, or drink, or raiment, or accommodations of any ſort; they have no families, children, widows, or orphans depending upon them, and by artleſs tales of woe, exciting, and blowing up their humane, benevolent, and generous feelings, and craving their charitable attention; they have no wants, no fears, no dangers or troubles. In their father's houſe there is plenty; "for the lamb which is "in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed "them, and lead them to living foun-"tains of Water." Rev. vii. ver. 17. Once, they ſailed on the ocean of life, and were in danger of being overwhelmed by its tumbling waves, Chriſt, the alone and never failing

pilot

pilot of ſouls, in ſpite of raging tempeſts, hath ſafely brought them to the deſired haven of uninterrupted peace and unfading joy: and as Dr Watts expreſſed it in his excellent paraphraſe on the 92d Pſalm.

Now do they ſee, and hear, and know,
All they deſir'd, or wiſh'd below,
And ev'ry pow'r, find ſweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.

"When a tree is cut down, the root "through the ſcent of water, will bud, "and bring forth boughs, like a plant;" when the ſun ſetteth, in the evening, he ariſeth, in the morning, and the ſea ebbs and flows: "when man goeth to "his long home, he lieth down, and "riſeth not, till the heavens be no "more, they ſhall not awake, nor be "raiſed out of their ſleep." He ſhall not return, to his ordinary labour, or enter upon his former buſineſs,

or amuſements. The moment, death cloſes his eyes, the ſeparated ſpirit, is conducted by guardian Angels into Abraham's boſom, to be eternally comforted.

" And though the body be brought " to the grave, it ſhall, only, remain in " the tomb," till the powerful voice, of the Archangel, as lightning, flying from one end of heaven to the other, ſhall penetrate the depths of the earth, and the bottom of the ſea, and ſhall reſtore to life all that ſleep in the duſt, and reſcue the priſoners of hope from the territories and corruption of darkneſs, then ſhall the prophecy of Hoſea be fulfilled, xiii. ver. 14. " I will ranſom them from " the power of the grave, I will re- " deem them from death! O death, " I will be thy plagues; O grave, I " will be thy deſtruction."

Tho'

Tho' in the duſt I lay my head,
Yet, gracious God, thou wilt not leave
My ſoul for ever with the dead,
Nor loſe thy children in the grave.
My fleſh ſhall thy firſt call obey,
Shake off the duſt and riſe on high;
Then ſhall thou lead the won'drous way
Up to the throne above the ſky.
There ſtreams of endleſs pleaſure flow;
And full diſcov'ries of thy grace
(Which we but taſted here below)
Spread heav'nly joys thro' all the place.

Having explained the words of the text, I ſhall now bend my attention to the inſtructions, which may be derived from them. In all labour there is, or ſhould be, profit; and the time employed in writing and in reading is loſt, if our underſtandings are not enlarged; our lives regulated; our hearts expanded with ardent love to God, and unfeigned good-will to men, brethren and fathers; and our affections ſteadily fixed upon thoſe

ſublime and heavenly truths, which elevate, ennoble, and aggrandize the ſoul.

If the contemplation of mortality ſhall inſpire with a juſt and ſpirited abhorrence of every low and vicious practice, and fire with the laudable ambition of excelling others and ourſelves, we will have good reaſon to make the ſame remark on it, which Samſon did, when he found bees and honey in the carcaſe of the lion. "Out of the eater came forth meat, "and out of the ſtrong came forth "ſweetneſs," Judges xiv. ver. 14.

As becometh immortals, with increaſing aſſiduity, let us pant after advances in the ſpiritual life. Religion is a progreſſive work, "For "the path of the juſt is as the ſhining "light that ſhineth more and more "unto

"unto the perfect day." Prov. iv. ver. 18. The body is brittle, and will ſoon be diſſolved, but the ſentient principle, which directeth and animateth every look, word, and motion, ſhall flouriſh through eternity. To feed and dreſs the body, only, is childiſh to an extreme; a moderate concern about the preſent life, is commendable, and anxiety is criminal. Imitating the Apoſtle Paul, whoſe ſpirit and writings will be admired, while ſun and moon endure, unleſs the iron age ſhould return, and, like an impetuous current, ſweep away from this globe, all that is good and ſacred. "Let us preſs toward the mark, for "the prize of the high calling of "God in Chriſt Jeſus." Phil. iii. ver. 14. While the miſer, with reſtleſs avidity, hunteth for gold, and the ſons of ambition for freſh laurels, let us pray, moſt fervently, that the linea-

lineaments of the divine image may be ſtamped upon our ſouls; that faith, love, gratitude, hope, joy, patience, reſignation, meekneſs, humility, charity, and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, may acquire additional life and vigour, and, by the good hand of God upon us, we may mount up, as on eagles wings, ſoar aloft, and go from ſtrength to ſtrength, till mortality is ſwallowed up of life.

Earneſtly to covet ſpiritual gifts, indicateth a real greatneſs of mind; and to be cold and languid, in the purſuit of glory, honour, and immortality, a moſt vile and baſe degradation of ſoul. We never act, late like rational creatures, till, with raiſed, and praiſeful affections of heart, we contemplate, adore, and admire, the lovely notices of the Divine power, wiſdom, truth, mercy, and goodneſs,

ſhining

ſhining with bright, and unrivaled luſtre, in the creation and government, and in the preſervation and redemption of the human race. In all ages, and in all nations; the wiſe, the great and good, with joyful emotions, have attentively conſidered the works of the Lord, and regarded the operations of his hand: and while they muſed, the fire of devotion burned, their meditations of God were inexpreſſibly ſweet and delightful: and, in the natural and genuine language of wonder and extacy, they cried out, with David in the 104th Pſalm, ver. 31, 33. "The glory of the Lord ſhall "endure for ever; the Lord ſhall "rejoice in his works: we will ſing "unto the Lord as long as we live. "We will ſing praiſe unto our God, "while we have any being."

F I N I S.

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